

110TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 7050

To create a 21st Century Civilian Energy Conservation Corps focused on promoting and improving the energy conservation and efficiency of residential and public buildings and spaces, creating economic opportunity for disconnected youth, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 24, 2008

Mr. INSLEE (for himself, Mr. SARBANES, Mr. HINCHEY, Ms. BORDALLO, Ms. MATSUI, Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota, Ms. SUTTON, and Mr. GRIJALVA) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce

A BILL

To create a 21st Century Civilian Energy Conservation Corps focused on promoting and improving the energy conservation and efficiency of residential and public buildings and spaces, creating economic opportunity for disconnected youth, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Energy Conservation
5 Corps Act of 2008”.

1 **SEC. 2. ENERGY CONSERVATION CORPS.**

2 (a) FINDINGS.—The Congress finds the following:

3 (1) The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) es-
4 tablished in 1933 was one of the singularly success-
5 ful Federal programs in American history.

6 (2) The CCC provided work and vocational
7 training for 3,500,000 unemployed young Americans
8 through projects designed to develop and conserve
9 the country's natural resources and build and main-
10 tain its infrastructure.

11 (3) Projects included environmental clean up,
12 wild fire prevention, erosion control, vegetation map-
13 ping, invasive species removal, reforestation, rec-
14 reational facility construction, trail building, swamp
15 drainage, flood relief, and disaster response.

16 (4) This extensive development and improve-
17 ment of public lands by the CCC was in large part
18 responsible for the modern national and State park
19 systems.

20 (5) Today, an estimated 3,800,000 18–24 year
21 olds, roughly 15 percent of all young adults, are nei-
22 ther employed nor in school. Since 2000 alone, the
23 ranks of these nonengaged young adults have grown
24 by 700,000, a 19 percent increase.

25 (6) High school dropouts are at high risk of in-
26 carceration. Approximately 16 percent of all young

1 men, ages 18–24, without a high school degree or
2 GED are either incarcerated or on parole at any
3 point in time. According to a 2002 Report from the
4 Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2,000,000 people are
5 incarcerated at an average annual cost of \$20,000
6 per inmate—for a total cost of \$40,000,000,000 per
7 year.

8 (7) In testimony before the House Education
9 and the Workforce Committee in 2005, Secretary of
10 Education Margaret Spellings said that dropouts
11 “cost our Nation more than \$260 billion” in “lost
12 wages, lost taxes, and lost productivity over their
13 lifetimes”.

14 (8) Energy inefficiencies account for at least 50
15 percent of all United States energy use.

16 (9) According to the World Watch Institute,
17 United States electricity use could be reduced by 70
18 percent through efficiency gains alone.

19 (10) Estimates indicate that while the average
20 United States household’s energy costs are equal to
21 7 percent of household income, low-income house-
22 holds spend 17 percent of their household earnings
23 on energy.

24 (11) In a manner similar to the CCC of the
25 1930s, disconnected young people can be mobilized

1 to retrofit, weatherize, and otherwise improve the
2 energy efficiency of residential and public facilities
3 that account for more than 40 percent of carbon
4 emissions.

5 (12) The rehabilitation, renovation, and retro-
6 fitting of these facilities by disconnected youth en-
7 gaged in public service benefit the disconnected
8 youth, the facility resident and owners, the commu-
9 nities in which they are located, as well as the envi-
10 ronment as shared by all.

11 (13) Service and conservation corps, by pro-
12 viding educational and training opportunities to dis-
13 connected youth through national and community
14 service projects, have an established record of ad-
15 ministering such projects.

16 (b) PURPOSE.—It is the purpose of this section—

17 (1) to create an Energy Conservation Corps
18 that will provide educational and economic opportu-
19 nities to disadvantaged and disconnected youth by
20 engaging them in team-based service projects de-
21 signed to promote and improve the energy conserva-
22 tion and efficiency of residential and public buildings
23 and spaces; and

24 (2) through the Energy Conservation Corps, to
25 stimulate interest among young people in steward-

1 ship of the environment and natural resources and
2 lifelong service to their communities and the United
3 States.

4 (c) ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ENERGY CONSERVA-
5 TION CORPS.—

6 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Energy Conservation
7 Corps is hereby established in the Department of
8 Energy.

9 (2) AGE AND BACKGROUND.—The Energy Con-
10 servation Corps shall consist of individuals between
11 the ages of 16 and 25, inclusive, at least 50 percent
12 of whom come from disadvantaged or disconnected
13 backgrounds.

14 (3) CIVIL SERVICE.—Individuals may be en-
15 rolled in the Energy Conservation Corps without re-
16 gard to the civil service and classification laws, rules,
17 or regulations of the United States.

18 (4) DURATION.—Individuals may be enrolled in
19 the Energy Conservation Corps for up to 24 months.

20 (5) OPPORTUNITIES.—Energy Conservation
21 Corps will provide such individuals with opportuni-
22 ties to further their education, through programs de-
23 signed to help them obtain a high school diploma,
24 GED, job training, professional certificate, or access
25 to post-secondary education.

1 (6) PROJECTS.—Energy Conservation Corps
2 will engage such individuals in service projects, pri-
3 marily team-based, designed to increase energy effi-
4 ciency and improve natural resources use.

5 (d) ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS.—

6 (1) SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS.—The Sec-
7 retary shall accept applications from qualified serv-
8 ice and conservation corps, and nonprofit organiza-
9 tions, units of State, county, and local government,
10 and institutions of higher education for the purpose
11 of establishing, operating, and supporting Corps.

12 (2) QUALIFICATIONS.—Applicants shall dem-
13 onstrate an ability to—

14 (A) provide Corpsmembers with access to
15 programs to obtain a high school diploma or
16 GED; and

17 (B) create pathways for Corpsmembers to
18 postsecondary education or a credential or fur-
19 ther job training and ultimately, employment.

20 (3) COST PER MEMBER.—Upon receipt of such
21 information as the Secretary may reasonably re-
22 quire, the Secretary may set a cost per member that
23 takes into account the educational, social, and family
24 services disconnected young people who are out of

1 school, out of work, exiting foster care, or have had
2 contact with the justice system may require.

3 (4) FLEXIBILITY.—The Secretary shall provide
4 flexibility in recruitment and retention outcomes to
5 grantees, depending on Corpsmember demographics,
6 in light of the fact that disconnected young people
7 are often more difficult to recruit and retain.

8 (5) ALTERNATIVE SUCCESS MEASUREMENT.—
9 The Secretary shall allow for alternative measure-
10 ments of success such as the use of growth models.

11 (6) TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—
12 The Secretary shall ensure that the Energy Con-
13 servation Corps has adequate access to relevant
14 training and technical assistance services to be pro-
15 vided by at least one national nonprofit organization
16 with a demonstrated record of experience in pro-
17 moting and disseminating effective practices among
18 service and conservation corps.

19 (e) ELIGIBLE CORPSMEMBERS.—

20 (1) AGE.—Youth enrolled in the Energy Con-
21 servation Corps shall be between the ages of 16 and
22 25.

23 (2) ASSURANCES.—Such youth shall be able to
24 provide assurances that they did not withdraw from

1 school for the purpose of participating in the pro-
2 gram.

3 (3) PREFERENCE.—Preference in recruitment
4 shall be given to disadvantaged or disconnected
5 young people.

6 (f) ELIGIBLE PROJECTS.—The Secretary shall accept
7 applications for service projects related to energy and re-
8 source conservation and rural development including, but
9 not limited to—

10 (1) building, retrofitting, and weatherizing resi-
11 dential and public facilities to meet appropriate
12 standards;

13 (2) conducting energy assessments and pro-
14 viding and implementing solutions for low-income
15 homeowners and communities;

16 (3) providing education, training, and support
17 regarding energy efficiency, resource conservation,
18 and reuse to low-income homeowners and commu-
19 nities;

20 (4) installing or constructing renewable energy
21 improvements (such as wind, wave, solar, biomass,
22 and geothermal energy sources); and

23 (5) building and maintaining alternative trans-
24 portation routes.

1 (g) PREFERENCE FOR CERTAIN PROJECTS.—In se-
2 lecting appropriate service projects to be carried out under
3 this section, the Secretary shall give a preference to those
4 projects that—

5 (1) provide development, training, and practical
6 work experience for young individuals in important
7 career fields relating to energy efficiency, and act as
8 preparation for additional education or permanent
9 employment for young adults and which will provide
10 long-term benefits to the public;

11 (2) instill in the participant a work ethic and a
12 sense of public service;

13 (3) will be labor intensive;

14 (4) can be planned and initiated promptly; and

15 (5) will provide academic, experiential, or com-
16 munity education opportunities.

17 (h) CONSISTENCY.—Each appropriate service project
18 carried out under this section shall be consistent with the
19 provisions of law and policies relating to the management
20 and administration of such projects, facilities, or re-
21 sources, with all other applicable provisions of law, and
22 with all management, operational, and other plans and
23 documents which govern the administration of such
24 projects, facilities, or resources.

1 (i) NONDISPLACEMENT.—The nondisplacement re-
2 quirements of the National and Community Service Act
3 of 1990 shall be applicable to all activities carried out
4 under this section by a qualified corps.

5 (j) DONATIONS.—The Secretary is authorized to ac-
6 cept donations of funds, services, facilities, materials, or
7 equipment for the purposes of operating the Energy Con-
8 servation Corps and carrying out appropriate service
9 projects by the Corps.

10 (k) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this section:

11 (1) DISADVANTAGED YOUTH.—The term “dis-
12 advantaged youth” means individuals between the
13 ages of 16 and 25, inclusive, who, because of certain
14 characteristics, circumstances, experiences, or
15 insufficiencies, encounter financial, legal, social, edu-
16 cational, emotional or health problems and may have
17 significant difficulties growing into adults who are
18 responsible citizens, productive workers, involved
19 members of communities.

20 (2) DISCONNECTED YOUTH.—The term “dis-
21 connected youth” means individuals between the
22 ages of 16 and 25, inclusive, who are out of school,
23 out of work, exiting foster care, or formerly court-
24 involved or incarcerated.

1 (3) QUALIFIED SERVICE AND CONSERVATION
2 CORPS.—The term “qualified service and conserva-
3 tion corps” means any program established by a
4 State or local government or by a nonprofit organi-
5 zation that—

6 (A) is capable of offering meaningful, full-
7 time, productive work for individuals between
8 the ages of 16 and 25, inclusive, in an infra-
9 structure, housing, or transportation setting;

10 (B) gives participants a mix of work expe-
11 rience, basic and life skills, education, training,
12 and support services; and

13 (C) provides participants with the oppor-
14 tunity to develop citizenship values and skills
15 through service to their communities and the
16 United States.

17 (4) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
18 to the Secretary of Energy.

19 (l) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
20 are authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary
21 \$100,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2009 through 2013
22 for carrying out this section.

○